



The President's Daily Brief

1 September 1970

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In South Vietnam the Communists continue their shelling; new infiltrators prepare to come down the trails from the north; and President Thieu can expect continued strong opposition from the Senate elected on Sunday. (Page 1)

Opposing forces in Cambodia continue to oscillate. (Page 3)

Malaysian Prime Minister Rahman is turning the reins over to his deputy, but little change is expected in the mode of government. (Page 4)

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VIETNAM

On 31 August the number of Communist shellings increased over the total recorded the previous day. In previous flurries this year, the number of incidents usually declined on the second day. Thus far, most attacks have been directed against the outposts of the government's territorial security forces, which defend the villages and transportation arteries in the countryside.

A number of Communist units known to be preparing for combat have not yet been employed. We therefore expect that the Communists will continue more active than usual for the next few days.

* * *

A message sent by a major infiltration station at Vinh on 28 August states that infiltration groups will "start to go down from September 6th through the end of the month." The message adds that the groups will depart at a rate of one per day.

If each of these groups is a battalion size--500 to 600 troops--the total Communist manpower commitment for September would run between 12,000 and 14,000 personnel. In the past, most infiltration has come down in battalion strength, although smaller groups also move through the system. A movement of this size so early in the year is unusual; infiltration usually does not pick up until the dry season begins.

* * *

According to nearly complete unofficial returns from Sunday's elections, the 30 Senate seats will go to the progovernment list headed by incumbent Senator Cao, the An Quang Buddhist-backed ticket led by Vu Van Mau, and the slate headed by independent Upper House Chairman Huyen.

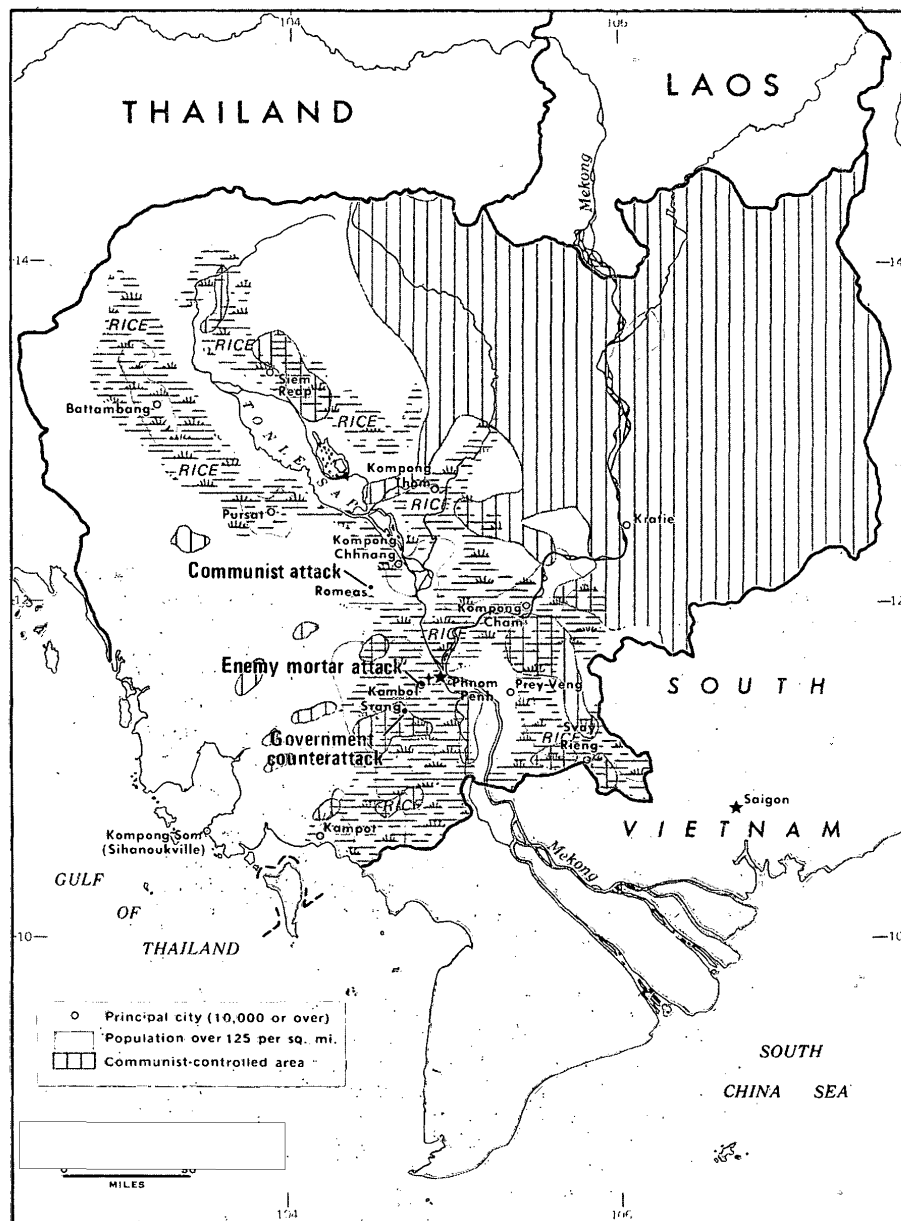
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The apparent victory of the Mau list will ensure the continuation of strong opposition in the Senate, although members of the list are among the more moderate elements in the An Quang faction. The ticket appears to have run even better than anticipated. Its strong showing may strengthen moderates within the An Quang leadership and encourage the Buddhists to be more politically active within the system rather than to promote antigovernment agitation in the streets.

Prospects for the government's legislative program in the new Senate may depend on how the Huyen slate lines up. The ticket appears generally sympathetic toward the government, but it contains independent-minded men who will probably not vote consistently with either progovernment or opposition blocs.

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CAMBODIA: Current Situation

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CAMBODIA

A mortar attack yesterday on the army training center at Kambol, eight miles from Phnom Penh, was one of the closest yet to the capital itself. Farther south, three battalions of government reinforcements failed to retake the town of Srang on 31 August, but on 1 September they were returning for another try.

In Kompong Chhnang Province, a Communist force of unknown size launched another hit-and-run attack on the infantry training center at Romeas on 30 August. Government forces now are engaged in a sweep operation near Romeas.

* * *

The first Indonesian shipment of 2,500 AK-47 rifles with 75,000 rounds of ammunition should be ready for delivery to Phnom Penh some time this week, according to Indonesian General Sumitro.

that the remaining 12,500 AK-47s and their ammunition should be ready for shipment by the end of October.

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MALAYSIA

Prime Minister Rahman has announced he is stepping down on 21 September and that his successor will be his deputy, Abdul Razak. The Tunku also stated that Parliament will reconvene next February. He said, however, that the National Operations Council, the Malay-dominated organization that has run the country since the Malay-Chinese riots of May 1969, will continue to function "to deal with the dangers of Communist activity."

The Tunku's announcements reflect the Malay leaders' view that a return to open political activity, proscribed since last year's race riots, is now manageable. At the same time, the leadership clearly intends to retain close supervision of national affairs through the Operations Council. Malay extremists indeed would be unlikely to accept any lessening of Malay domination of the government.

Razak, long accustomed to being number two, will probably tend to rely on advice from the Tunku, who will not be averse to giving it.

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